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Discours du juge Gayarré

sur La question religieuse soulevée par les Know Nothings aux États-Unis

(Je crois que ce Discours doit porter celui du 5 juin 185[illegible] qui est à ce Discours que on fait allusion à la page 3[illegible] de la brochure intitulée "Address to the people of Louisiana on the State politics" du 1er Sept. 55.)



1 Sept 1855

Brothers:—A great party, decorated with the patriotic name of the "American Party," has lately formed itself, and built up its tower of strength on the ruins, and with the very stones of the stately edifices of political power erected throughout this country by the two parties which, for fifty years, have been alternately ruling its destinies. Those two parties seem to have accomplished the end for which they were permitted by an all-wise Providence to live and to struggle together in unyielding hostility, and they have met the fate which awaits everything human—they are dying; and they give way to their posterity, that is to say, to new parties, to new issues, and to all those political commotions or dissensions which are the very condition of the existence of a free people. One of those new parties is now preparing to take the field as a national party, whose vitality and powers of endurance will be tested at the next Presidential election. So far it has organized itself in secret; it may continue to deliberate and to act in secret in relation to the adoption of any measure of national policy; but when it shall have adopted any such measure in the secrecy of its preparatory family meetings, it will neither have the faculty, nor, I hope, the inclination to shrink from avowing and supporting it in the face of the world. We cannot establish ourselves as a national party without a national platform, as patent as the sun, and publicly proclaimed without jesuitical reticences. The necessity of publicity for such a platform is felt to be so imperiously required, that the New York portion of the American party has already printed a pamphlet in which it discloses its principles; and Mr. Flournoy, on his consenting to become the candidate of the new order for the office of governor in Virginia, thought that it would not be safe for the cause he had embraced, to withhold from the examination of the people at large the fundamental basis of the

doctrine on which the American party stands. That platform, which is to be the holy mountain from which we are to preach to the people, must, of course, be in strict conformity with the constitution of our Order. It must be nothing else but the embodiment of its principal features. It becomes therefore incumbent upon us carefully to examine whether that constitution does not contain one feature which, if retained, would destroy the beautiful symmetry of the rest, prevent the permanent success of our party, and even threaten it with instant annihilation. In this age, no course of national policy which is not correct will long survive the wounds made by the dissecting knife of publicity, and resist the discussions of a free press. In this age, a narrow-minded, ungenerous, and bigoted principle or rule of action, is but a craven-hearted knight, who will soon go down in the lists at the slightest touch of the spear of the nobler foe whom he will have to encounter.

At once, therefore, I come to the question, and I call your earnest attention to that clause in our constitution, which excludes from any participation in our political rights more than a million and a half of our native citizens. I mean that part of the constitution which refers to Roman Catholics, and which (it is useless to disguise it) establishes what may be rightly called a religious test. The policy or propriety of the introduction of a "religious test," either directly or indirectly, in the politics, and consequently, in the national government of this country, I consider as the most important question which has been raised in these United States since the adoption of the Federal Constitution. It is a question, whose decision one way or the other will have in its immediate, collateral, or incidental consequences, as great an influence, not only on the destinies of this continent, but also of the rest of the globe, as our Declaration of Independence itself. The mere fact of its having been seriously mooted, in the nineteenth century, in this gigantic republic, claiming to be the light of the world and a model for all other governments, constitutes a startling event in the history of mankind. I ap-

proach it therefore with a feeling of awe and solemnity, and I pray that it may be discussed here with as much patriotism, wisdom, forbearance, worldly foresight, and Christian charity, as were manifested in the august body that framed the Constitution under which we have become the most prosperous people that ever existed.

By establishing political disabilities against Roman Catholics, the evident intention of the "Order" is to eradicate Roman Catholicism from the land of freedom. It would be disingenuous and unmanly to deny it, or even to equivocate on this point. Is this necessary for the safety and prosperity of this people? Can it be done? Can we execute such a measure if determined upon? Can we adhere systematically to such a line of policy, and at the same time remain true to the Constitution of the United States? Nay, admitting that we possess such a constitutional right, would it be wise to exercise it? What would be to our party the consequences of an open war declared by it against Catholicism? These are the questions which, with your permission, I intend to review successively, and as briefly as possible; and I claim your brotherly indulgence, during the performance of an unwelcome task imposed upon me by a proper sense, I trust, of what I owe to these United States in general, to Louisiana in particular, which I here partly represent, to you, as the representatives of the great American party, and to myself as a Catholic.

The topic which forces itself on our consideration, is one which requires the utmost impartiality of investigation—an impartiality which, perhaps, could only be found in the breast of one who should be neither a Protestant nor a Catholic, and who, on the contrary, should be unconnected with any of the infinite sects into which Christendom is divided. But having scrupulously scrutinized my heart, I believe that I bring to this meeting as much impartiality as any one of my brothers, and, in a few words, here are my reasons for having arrived at such a conclusion. I was baptized within the pale of the Roman Catholic Church. But, when I reached manhood, I studied atten-

tively the Bible and the New Testament, and I judged for myself. So much of the prescriptions of the Church of Rome which I think contrary to the Holy Book, or frivolous, or immaterial to my salvation, I entirely disregard. I do not go to confession, but I will never presume to interfere with those who differ from me in that respect. Born a Catholic, I shall die a Catholic; but should any priest pretend that, in that capacity, he has the right even to dream of exercising any jurisdiction over my temporal affairs, I would consider him as a lunatic, well worthy of a cell in Bedlam. One of the most eminent Protestant divines now in New York, whom I am proud to call my intimate friend, to whose captivating eloquence I have frequently listened with delight, whether it assumed the stately language of the pulpit, or whether it relaxed into the gentle tones of conversation, has told me more than once, although we do not always agree, that I am as good a Protestant as he is. Therefore I may be permitted to believe myself as competent as anybody here present, on the score of impartiality at least, to discuss the question of the establishment of political disabilities against Catholics. I might even claim to be more impartial than any one of my Protestant brothers, for I doubt very much whether there is one of them in this assembly, to whom a priest of the Church of Rome has ever declared, that he considers him as good a Catholic as himself.

I will not take a sectarian, but a statesmanlike view of the question. I do not consider you as a tribunal before which Catholicism is to be tried, and I have neither the mission nor the necessary abilities, to stand up here as the advocate of such a client. There is an infinitely more august tribunal than yours—a tribunal which sits day and night, and never adjourns—a tribunal in which presides public opinion—the public opinion of the whole civilized world. Before that tribunal Catholicism is destined to be perpetually arraigned. So far, eighteen centuries have been heard as witnesses for or against her. But the verdict has not yet been rendered—and the jury still deliberate.

They do not agree: all that we know is, that the accused has more than one hundred and fifty millions of the jury in her favor. Whatever, therefore, be the merits or demerits of Roman Catholicism, whether she be the scarlet whore or the milk-white doe, let us leave her fate to the only competent tribunal, and let us examine calmly, philosophically, with unprejudiced minds, like legislators, like statesmen, and not like theologians, if it be the interest of these United States, if it be the interest of any party which aspires to become the dominant one, to proclaim war against Catholicism.

When an attack is meditated, everybody will admit that the first thing the aggressor has to do is to study the strength of his adversary, and to calculate his chances of success against him. This is the very A B C of common sense.

What is then the strength and the powers of resistance of Catholicism, is the first question we have to ask of ourselves. I will answer it by quoting the opinion on this subject of a distinguished Protestant—of a man who, as an historian and a statesman, is well calculated from the nature of his studies and observations, and from the splendor of his intellect, to arrive at correct conclusions in the premises—and who, being adverse to Catholicism by his early religious training, and by the convictions of his maturer experience and reflection, is not liable to be regarded by you as an incompetent judge. I mean the Hon. T. Babington Macaulay. What does he say? What is his evidence, when brought into court to testify?

"There is not," says he, "and there never was, on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that church joins the two great ages of human civilization. No other institution is left standing, which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of the Roman pontiffs. That line we trace back in an

unbroken series, from the pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century, to the pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The Republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the Republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy; and the Republic is gone, and the Papacy remains—not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigor. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the furthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustine; and still confronting hostile kings in the same spirit with which she confronted Attila. The number of her children is greater than in any former age. Her acquisitions in the New World have more than compensated her for what she has lost in the Old. Her spiritual ascendency extends over the vast countries which lie between the plains of the Missouri and Cape Horn—countries which, a century hence, may not improbably contain a population as large as that which now inhabits Europe. The members of her community are certainly not fewer than a hundred and fifty millions; and it will be difficult to show that all the other Christian sects united amount to a hundred and twenty millions. Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that exist in this world, and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain—before the Frank had passed the Rhine—when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch—when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigor, when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge, to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. * * * * *

"Four times since the authority of the Church of Rome was

established in Western Christendom, has the human intellect risen up against her yoke. Twice she remained completely victorious. Twice she came forth from the conflict, bearing the marks of cruel wounds, but with the principle of life still strong within her. When we reflect on the tremendous assaults which she has survived, we find it difficult to conceive in what way she is to perish."

These are the well weighed sentiments—this the magnificent language of a Protestant writer. If he be correct in his views, you will admit that you have selected no mean and puny adversary. Such being the case, it is nothing but prudence, and not cowardice, to pause—and to examine the position in which we shall be placed after we have issued publicly our declaration of war.

If you retain, as one of the fundamental principles of the American party, the clause introduced in your constitution in relation to a particular religious creed, you are attempting to do *de facto*, what you cannot do *de jure*—to do by party enactment what you cannot do by legislative enactment—to do by party legislation what Congress cannot do by national legislation. As a party, in direct violation of a special provision of the constitution, you prohibit *the free exercise of an establishment of religion*, by inflicting disabilities on those who profess it. This is what the American party does, and what Congress cannot do. The Federal Government cannot require a religious test as a qualification to any office of trust or profit under the United States. The American party requires that test. It is only by a miserable quibble, unworthy of the dignity of the American character, and not by any sound argument, that we can endeavor to establish that this is not a violation of the constitution of the United States, because it is a well settled principle of jurisprudence in every country, that the law does not permit to do indirectly what cannot be done directly. The Constitution of the United States being the highest law of the land, every evasion of it is illegal, and ought to be carefully

checked. Should you elect a president of the United States, what would be his position? Will he not, in the Capitol, in the face of the American people, and of the whole world, putting his right hand on the Bible, swear *to preserve, protect, and defend* the Constitution of the United States, and therefore swear that he shall not interfere with the exercise of the religion of Roman Catholics by imposing political disabilities upon them, and shall not require a religious test as a qualification for office under these United States? What will become of his previous oath exacted by this order, that he shall do the very reverse? Here are a public oath and a secret one directly at variance. If he be true to your constitution, the very next thing he will have to do after his instalment into office, will be to say in his inaugural address, in the very words used by Mr. Flournoy, of Virginia: "The rights of American-born Catholics must not be interfered with by any legislative enactment, but, by a full and independent exercise of the right of suffrage and of the appointing power, they must be excluded from the offices of the government in all its departments." I say that this language in his mouth would be unconstitutional, and, in a moral point of view, would be as disgraceful as any language that ever fell from human lips. It would be received with a shout of indignation in this country, and that shout would be responded to from every corner of the earth. Are you ready, as a party, to meet that universal hue and cry in all its consequences?

Another question. If you retain in the constitution of the national council that feature which is proscriptive of Roman Catholics, you evidently sanction the exposition which Mr. Flournoy has made of your doctrine—which is, that a party, by a free and independent exercise of the right of suffrage and the appointing power, may do what cannot be done by legislative enactment. Men of the South, you who are in the minority on so many questions in relation to rights which you hold dearer than your lives, are you ready to adopt as your platform, that

a party, by a full and independent exercise of popular suffrage and of the appointing power, can do what cannot be done by legislative enactment? If you choose to answer in the affirmative, if you choose to open that fatal door, and admit the long train of spectral figures which I see eagerly waiting on the outside, all that I have to say is, that you are mad, and may God in his mercy protect you! And to you, men of the North, I say, the love of power is sure to defeat itself, if it does not wear the veil of forbearance, and if it is not assisted by caution and discretion. Pause and reflect. It is time yet. The flag of the American party is made, but it is not unfurled. Let us modify it so that every breeze of heaven may delight to sport with its glorious folds.

But suppose that you have the constitutional power to reduce to political annihilation all those who profess the Roman Catholic creed in the United States—have you the moral right to use it? I beg you to consider that, as all foreigners, whether Catholics or Protestants, are to be excluded henceforward from office, the decree of degradation which you issue against Catholics applies only to your fellow-citizens of that creed, who are like you born on the soil. This gives still greater importance to the question. Foreigners, mind you, are not in court, as we are all agreed on their exclusion.

Brothers, the endeavor to found a great national party in this free country on the basis that Americans, by the bare fact of their being Catholics, are to be excluded from any share in the government, would, in my opinion, if persisted in, be a stupendous event, and its consequences might be incalculable.

The world does not stand still. Protestants are not now what they were two hundred years ago. They have progressed towards a better order of things. So have Catholics. The only question we have to examine is, why should Catholics of the present age be treated like the Jews of the dark ages? Is it true that a Catholic recognises any temporal power in the Pope out of Rome? Where is that phenomenon of a Catholic to be

seen? Is it in France, in Austria, in Spain, in the United States, or any other country? Is it even in Rome, from which the Sovereign Pontiff would fly to-morrow, if French troops were not quartered near the Vatican? I maintain that, out of a million of Catholics in any country save Rome, not twenty could be found, unless they are idiots, who would not laugh scornfully at the idea of the Pope's exercising any temporal power over them. There may be a Catholic idiot, as there may be a Protestant idiot. Would it be fair to judge of Protestantism or Catholicism from the declarations of an idiot, or from the ravings of insanity? Oh! but the priests exercise great temporal influence over their flocks, it is said. I answer: so does a Protestant minister—so does a physician over his patients—a lawyer over his clients. On what ground? Because of the confidence reposed in them as individuals, and not on account of their profession or avocation. Are they to be ostracized? I know a few manufacturers at the North, who exercise more political influence than all the priests in the United States put together. Are we to form a party on the basis that all manufacturers are to be excluded from office? The day may come when their influence also may be declared to be deleterious.

Brothers, if a Catholic is not worthy of any office of trust or profit in the government, he is not worthy of any position of trust or profit in private life. If he is not fit to be a judge, he is not fit to be a juror. If he is not fit to be a juror, he ought not to be a witness—he is not to be trusted in anything. His priest, who may relieve him of his obligations towards his country, can relieve him of his obligations as a husband, father, son, friend, or anything else. Would any one of you take as his partner in business a man whom he would not trust with a public office? Certainly not. This is logic itself. This is the light in which you tell all Catholics you look upon them! Do you not shudder at the state of abasement to which you would reduce mil-

lions of your countrymen, born and to be born in this boasted land of equal rights?

But if you really think that Catholicism thus debases mankind, you ought to take more vigorous measures against it. If Catholicism makes bad citizens, it is not enough to inflict disabilities on those citizens when they are made. You ought to prevent their being made at all. You ought as statesmen, as lovers of your country, to punish those who teach Catholicism—you ought to prevent the propagation of Catholicism, as you prevent the propagation of crime. Will you put in jail the robber who steals a watch, and inflict no punishment on those who, by teaching Catholicism, will rob the state of millions of citizens by making them unworthy of all confidence? Why hang a man who kills another—and not burn the Catholic priest who will degrade and sink to a state of Helotism all those to whom he may communicate his doctrines? The same reasons which are given to exclude Catholics from office would be equally as strong to fine and imprison them, and even to drive them away—so as to have done with them at once. Nay, if Catholics are to remain such an inferior race among you, I think that you are not consistent if you do not prevent the increase of that population by immigration, or by birth—for it will be the increase of a hostile population, which, living in your midst, cannot politically amalgamate with you. It is far more humane to forbid a man to come to this country, than to permit him to come and have children who are to constitute an inferior race. There is no evil more sedulously to be guarded against than the introduction of an inferior race of citizens in any state. These are logical deductions, which naturally flow from the principle which you establish. If you shrink from these consequences, do not embrace the principle by which they are inevitably produced. Do not stop half way. If Catholics deserve to be maimed and crippled, off with their heads. They will do less mischief when dead, than when half alive.

Catholicism, you say, debases the human mind, because it

does not tolerate the exercise of private judgment in matters of religion. No church that I know of admits the right of private judgment—or if it admits it, it is so long as it is exercised to induce adherence to the faith of that church. But no church allows one to dissent from it in fundamental points, and to remain in it. The dissident must walk out of its pale—or dwell in it by sufferance, as he is not in reality what he nominally pretends to be. There is no difference on that score between all the churches which have ever existed. Still you persist in maintaining that the Catholic, who submits to abdicate the exercise of his judgment in matters of faith, is apt to abdicate it in everything else—that he contracts slavish habits—and is not fitted for a Republican form of Government—at least, that he is not worthy of any public trust in any Republic. But is it so? Is a Catholic in that respect inferior to the member of any sect? Take, for instance, a Catholic and a Presbyterian. They both may admit or reject, wholly or only in part, the doctrines of their respective churches. They may not choose, however, to go over to any other church, because they may think that theirs, defective as they may be, are as good as any—that all churches are more or less defective—that, besides, a very long life, were they to devote it entirely to theological studies, would not enable them to choose conscientiously between the innumerable sects which are indebted for their origin to the exercise of free judgment. They may both think that the sermon from the mountain is sufficient for them, and, therefore, they may come to the conclusion that they may as well remain in the church in which they were born. In that case both are Latitudinarians. But certainly, both the Latitudinarian Presbyterian and the Latitudinarian Catholic exercise their judgment, and are, in that respect, on a footing of equality. The Catholic is not more slavish than the Presbyterian so far. Take now the strict Presbyterian and the strict Catholic. Are they not on a footing of equality as to the exercise of judgment? Why is a man a strict Presbyterian? It is because he

thinks that his church expounds correctly the doctrine of Christ. So does the Catholic in relation to his church. There is inevitably the exercise of judgment in both cases. There is as much exercise of judgment in adhering strictly, as there is in adhering loosely; there is as much ratiocination in differing in part, as there is in differing *in toto.* For instance, if I choose to believe without examination what the President of this meeting may tell me on any particular subject, it is because, not having leisure for examination, or distrusting my abilities, and believing that, from his previous studies, from his intimate acquaintance with the subject, or from his acknowledged superiority to me, all the chances are that he will come to a more correct opinion than I can, I am satisfied to receive his *dictum* as one deserving my acquiescence. Therefore I submit my judgment to his own. But I cannot submit my judgment to that of another except through a reasoning process. To bow intellectually as well as physically is the result of will—will is the result of thought—and thought implies the exercise of judgment, good or bad. A strict Presbyterian is one who submits his judgment to that of his betters in points of faith—that is to say, to his church. So does the Roman Catholic. If a Presbyterian and a Catholic reject any of the tenets of their respective churches, they become respectively a Latitudinarian Presbyterian and a Latitudinarian Catholic. They belong to their churches only by a partial allegiance. Should they secretly repudiate all their tenets, whilst openly adhering to the mere forms and usages for their own convenience, or because they look upon them as insignificant, then they secretly secede, and secretly belong to a church of their own. Therefore, I say, that both the Presbyterian and the Catholic are on a footing of equality, whether they are strict or latitudinarian. To be strict, or latitudinarian, in Catholicism or in Presbyterianism, or in anything else, requires the correct or incorrect exertion of judgment, but, beyond doubt, the *exercise of judgment.* I defy the

most subtle dialectician to drive me from this intrenched position.

But you will say—grant that—what does it amount to? It does not show that we are wrong when we affirm that there is an immense difference between the enlightened judgment of the Protestant and the benighted judgment of the Catholic. Catholicism contracts the intellect and depraves the heart. Protestantism refines the soul, and expands the mind. Catholics, from their very creed, are necessarily slavish in their dispositions. Protestants, for the same reason, are essentially freemen. Therefore, in a free country, Catholics must be excluded from all participation in the government. They must be the governed, and Protestants the rulers. This is what you say—you not only express these sentiments, but you act accordingly. And what do you do, men of the North, who wish to abolish slavery in the South—the slavery of the Blacks? You proceed to establish the worst kind of slavery among the Whites—the servitude of the mind—the servitude of the soul—the yielding of man to man, not of his labor and sweat, but the yielding of what he owes to his God—the surrender not of his time, his field, or the fruits of his toil, but the delivering over of his conscience into the hands of another—the relinquishment of his religion, which is dearer to an honest man than life and property—a servitude of the heart, infinitely more odious than the servitude of the limb. See what weapons you give to the advocates of the slavery of the Blacks. What are your reasons for degrading Catholics to a state of inferiority? It is that their moral and religious training is incompatible with Republican institutions. You take that for granted, you do not permit it to be questioned. You assume the right of judging for yourselves in that, as in everything else. You will not listen to the plea made by Catholics that, being Protestants, you become, on such an occasion, the accuser, the witness, the judge, and the executioner.

Well, then! For the sake of argument, and merely to please

you, brothers, I am willing to concede that the Protestants who have made the constitution of this order have the absolute right to judge of Catholicism as they like. Now, answer this question if you can. If a certain number of Protestants have the indisputable right to declare that Catholics, even the best educated and the most exemplary in their lives, are not to be put on a footing of equality with their fellow citizens, why other Protestants, equally true believers, equally righteous, equally enlightened—for all Protestants are equals—you admit that at least—why, I say, have not those Protestants the right to declare that negroes are not to be put on a footing of equality with them, and are not to enjoy all the immunities of the white race, on account of their physical and moral organization? Will you reply, that those Protestants are slaveholders, and are too much interested in the question to be permitted to pass judgment on negroes? Then why is not the same rule to be applied to yourselves? You are Protestants. Are you not too much interested in the issue against Catholics to be permitted to pass judgment on them? Why should you not be supposed to be as much interested in the issue against Catholics, as you suspect your Protestant brothers to be in the question of slavery? Why should you not be held to be as much prejudiced against Catholics as slaveholders are supposed to be against negroes? Catholics are an inferior race of beings on account of their defective education, and ought to be kept in political servitude. That is your assertion. You say it proves itself. Well, grant it. But millions of Protestants in the south say also, negroes are an inferior race of beings from physical and intellectual organization, and therefore they must be kept in political and civil servitude. It is their assertion, and, mind you, they say, like you, that it proves itself. Why do you not reciprocate their compliment? Grant them what they grant to you. Have they not as much right to judge for themselves as you have? and, mark!—it is much more easy to demonstrate that Catholics are capable of all the blessings of liberty and of

the most heroic virtues;—it is much easier to prove that, far from being debased by their creed, they can produce an infinitely more numerous list of great men than can number, even when combined together, all the other creeds which have existed since the birth of Christ; it is much more easy to give judicial proof of all these things, than it is to establish that negroes are worthy of being on a footing of equality with the white race. The burden of proof on one side is much lighter than on the other—so much so, that, weak as I am in point of ability, but invincible because clad with the celestial armor of truth, I throw down the gauntlet of defiance on the ground which I have taken, and I am ready to meet before you or before the world the best champion that will enter the lists, sure as I am that he would fall before being even grazed by any weapon of mine, like the proud Templar when he encountered the wounded knight, Ivanhoe, who, debilitated as he was by the loss of blood, and almost reeling with faintness and fatigue on his jaded steed, had, nevertheless, not feared to lift up his lance to defend innocence against oppression, and save the Jewess from the stake of fanaticism; and who, single-handed, but with brow serene, confronted the haughty looks and angry threats of the multitude of armed foes who surrounded him.

Is not the comparison which I make between slaveholders enslaving negroes and Protestants enslaving Catholics, exactly appropriate? The plea of inferiority is the same urged in both cases—by Protestants against Catholics, and by slaveholders against negroes. The right which Protestants claim to judge for themselves, and to decide what is the nature of Catholics, regardless of the opinion of others on the subject—is similar to the right claimed by slaveholders, and at which you affect to be so greatly shocked—which is, to judge also for themselves, and determine that the nature of negroes is very different from that which you or others maintain it to be. There is but one way in which you may endeavor to escape, but escape in vain, from the iron grasp of logic—it is by saying: you, slaveholders,

are only a few millions. The whole world is against you, and the natural inference is that you are wrong. Is that your argument? .... Very well.—I reply: you, who wish to establish a religious test as one of the fundamental principles of our party, are certainly not more numerous than the slaveholders. By this solemn consecration of the most hateful of all narrow-minded and bigoted prejudices, you will have enlisted against you, not only a considerable number of your Protestant fellow-citizens, but also the remainder of the civilized world. For Great Britain has abandoned the religious test to which she clung so long; all other Protestant countries have adopted or are adopting the same liberal course of policy. All Catholic countries, swayed by the force of public opinion, have done, are doing, or will do the same in relation to Protestants. Europe may be said to be intellectually and morally, as well as physically, in arms, to establish religious toleration and the equality of religious rights, not only in Christendom, not only in the dominions of the Moslem, but also throughout the earth. Shall America alone retrograde in the march of philanthropy and Christian liberality? No religious test!—no religious proscription!—is the cry—the absolute want of the civilized world. If that is the case, and you cannot deny it, you are in the position in which you place the slaveholder and with which you taunt him so exultingly. If your argument is good against them in relation to negroes, mine is conclusive against you in relation to Catholics. It is from your own arsenal that I take the weapon which strikes you to the heart.

If you have the right to discountenance a sect because inferior, you have the right to countenance one because it is superior to all others. Do you claim the right to countenance a sect? If yea, I dare you to proclaim it; if no, then you have no right to discountenance. Get out of the horns of the dilemma if you can. The same considerations which would justify a party in discountenancing a religion by means of political disabilities, would justify the discountenancing of that religion also by civil

disabilities and by penal laws; and the fact is, this is precisely what you do. Is not the political disability you establish against Catholics tantamount to a penalty? Will you venture to affirm seriously that, as a party, you permit the free exercise of religion according to the full spirit and letter of the Constitution of the United States? What does the Constitution of the Order say to a Catholic? You are free to exercise your religion, but you become thereby incapable of filling any office of trust or profit in the government; you are not to be trusted in public affairs, and by inevitable deductions you are impliedly declared not to be worthy of trust in private affairs. You are free to exercise your religion, but if you do, you shall have these words branded on your forehead—*unworthy of trust!* Just as you would say to an individual, you are free to go into that street; we will not prevent it by any legislative enactment—that would be an abominable infringement of the liberties secured to you—but if you do, we, by the *free and sovereign exercise of our judgment*, will knock out your brains. Would it not be a sort of demoniacal mockery? Do you indulge in any more humane pleasantry when you say, God forbid, dear Catholic brothers, as good Native Americans as we are, that we should ever interfere with the free exercise of your religion. We will not whip you at the pillory; we will not slit your noses, cut your ears, or send you to the penitentiary at hard labor. You shall not even pay a fine. We are too tolerant, too good Christians for that. You are free, that is well understood; but there shall be an impassable gulf between you and all situations in which you might display the talents bestowed upon you by God and improved by your industry, in which you might acquire fame for yourselves and deserve the gratitude of your country. The Congress, the bench of the magistracy, the sword of military command in the army or the navy, are not for such contemptible wretches as you are. Neglect and obscurity shall be your doom whilst you may pine at seeing other men, whose talent and station do not rise up to your heels, dress their painted mediocrity with the robes of office,

the very highest perhaps, and rising like stars on the political horizon, attract the gaze of the wondering multitude. If you have a son whose expanded brow, whose thoughtful eye, is the prophetic pledge of his being destined to be one of the missionaries of the intellect to mankind; if he be such a son as makes a father's heart leap with delight; if he be a Webster, a Clay, a Calhoun, a Scott, in embryo, the cultivation of those gifts of heaven, the development of his generous ambition, shall be a torture to you and to him. "You shall look on him as a being doomed to lead as you have led, the abject life of a political serf. All those high honors, so much more precious than the most costly gifts of despots, with which a free country decorates its illustrious citizens, shall be to him as they have been to you, objects not of hope and virtuous emulation, but of hopeless, envious pining. Educate him if you wish him to feel his degradation. Educate him if you wish to stimulate his craving for what he never must enjoy;"* or rather do not educate him—in mercy do not educate him; and do rather sink the heart and mind of the white slave to the level of the black slave's heart and the black slave's mind. Yes, a white slave. For if he who is not permitted to choose a wife, a friend, a companion, as he likes, to pursue the occupation he pleases, and to regulate his liberty as he deems proper, is a slave; the worst of all slaves is he who is not permitted to choose his religion, and the most abject is he who, in a free government, being once put on a footing of civil and political equality with all his fellow citizens, consents to his being robbed of his inheritance by the organized tyranny of a faction or party.

To understand the position to which you would reduce Catholics in this country, you must put yourselves in their shoes, and bring the question home to your breasts. Suppose that the Catholics should, in the course of time, have the majority, and suppose they should bind themselves by a solemn oath to form a

* Macaulay's Essays. Church and State, p. 265, vol. iii.

party, the fundamental principle of which would be the annihilation of all the political rights of Protestants. Would not the most lax Protestant—the most high-toned, high-church Episcopalian—would not he who might be tottering from Protestantism towards the doubts and skepticism of infidelity, or might be leaning towards Catholicism, shrink back, if a man of honor, when seeing the rod of compulsion lifted over him? Would he not embrace again what he was going to reject? Would he not link his destinies to those of his persecuted Protestant brothers, and die rather than yield? Would persecution not strengthen Protestantism? Depend upon it, a similar course on your part will have a similar effect on Catholicism. It will give it new vigor and life. Tell the American Protestants that they shall have no rank either in the navy or the army; tell them that they shall have no civil office; tell them that they shall have no political rights; in one word, tell them that they are slaves, and they would rise like one man, they would shout with one voice: Death or Liberty. Your Catholic brothers are Americans, remember. They are not a Neapolitan Catholic rabble. They are your peers in everything, to the very back-bone, in body, in intellect, in courage, in love of freedom, in patriotism; and as soon as your edict is promulgated, and is well understood, rely on it, they will feel as you would feel in their place; they will prove themselves, in every throbbing of their pulse, as good Americans as you are, and they will shout as you would: Death or Liberty.

In God's name, what have they done? No matter what their theology is, so long as that theology does not lead to unworthy and palpable deeds. What are their crimes? Out with their catalogue, and prove them. Do not heat your brains into the conception of dire chimeras. We must have realities. Do not frighten your imagination with what you presume that Catholics have done, and may do, in consequence of their religious belief. What do they do? That is the question. Have they formed a party to proscribe Protestants?

Have they taken an oath never to put a Protestant in any office of trust or profit? Have they refused to bleed for their country on the battle-field? Have they ever betrayed any public trust reposed in them? Have they ever committed treason? Are they not peaceful, honest, industrious citizens? In every department of business, either public or private, are they not as trusty, in a body, as the great mass of their Protestant brothers? Are they perpetually engaged in riots? Are they pulling down the temples of Protestants and murdering them? Do they refuse them the right hand of fellowship? Do they refuse to associate with them, either in the market-place or in the halls of pleasure? What are their offences, be they light or heavy?—facts! facts! facts! no idle suppositions. Why should you treat them like felons, by excluding them from all participation in your political rights? Nay; why do you treat them as if they were worse than felons? No man is a felon on presumption, but only on conviction. A Catholic, it seems, is not a man; for he is a presumed felon—a convicted felon by construction, and he is dealt with accordingly. Ho!—headsman, do thy duty! Strike the knight's spurs from his heels—down with his banner—let it trail in the dust—he is disgraced; his crime is to be a Catholic—he is unworthy of trust. And thus, an American Bayard, without fear and without reproach—an American Cid, the mirror of chivalry—because of their being Catholics, would not be permitted to uphold in battle the American flag!

The Catholics are universally progressing towards toleration. Will Protestants retrograde? And shall those Protestants be the Protestants of the United States? When the Catholics of France and the Protestants of England, whom centuries of hostility had divided, trust each other, and recognise their equality when facing an enemy's flag, shall Americans distrust Americans, when gathered under the broad folds of their country's banner? The Catholics of France and the Protestants of England embrace each other in life—they embrace each other in

death when falling on the battle-field for a common cause, and thus they excite the admiration of the world. Shall the Catholics and the Protestants of this glorious confederacy of freemen —the sons of the same fatherland—those who have sprung from the same cradle—those who are entitled to the same inheritance of liberty, seize each other's throat, and thus provoke the contemptuous pity of the most distant regions of the earth? God forbid! We have already but too many causes of dissension, which have shaken the Union to its very foundation. When we cannot exorcise from our political body some of the demons who have domiciliated themselves therein, let us not swell their number by permitting the introduction of the worst fiend of Pandemonium—the fiend of fanaticism—that fiend who quotes Scripture, and carries a religious test in his hand.

Should you refuse to wipe off this obnoxious clause against Catholics, I would then ask you why you do not embrace the high church Episcopalians within the same proscription. The difference existing between the High Church of England and modern Roman Catholicism is very slim indeed, and I further say, that the lines which separate the American High Episcopalian Church and the High Church of England are almost imperceptible. In the moderate course of my reading, I have chanced to lay my hands on certain Episcopalian writers,* "who pronounce the right of private judgment, as it is generally understood throughout Protestantism, to be a monstrous abuse. According to them, the Church of England—the High Episcopalian Church, is the pure Catholic Church of Christ, which possesses the Apostolical succession of ministers, and within whose pale is to be found that unity,† which is essential to truth. For her decisions they claim a degree of reverence far beyond what the moderate school of Bossuet demands for the Pope, and scarcely short of what the most bigoted Catholic would ascribe to Pope and General Council together. To sepa-

* Macaulay's Ess ys. Church and State. † Like the Roman Catholic unity.

rate from her communion is schism; to reject her interpretations of Scripture is sinful presumption." If those writers are correct, and among them is the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone,* Member of Parliament, and of the British Cabinet, the objections raised against Catholics equally apply to Episcopalians. Why then should they not, like Catholics, walk over the plank? I might next take up the Jews, the Quakers, the Mormons, the members of the Greek Church, and many other sectarians or religionists, and show that they are at least quite as dangerous as the Catholics, and equally deserving of political decapitation. But I am satisfied with merely throwing out these hints, as to the existence of certain weapons which might be used hereafter, should there ever be a state of open warfare.

I have merely given you the faint outlines of the dangers, the obstacles, and the odium you will have to encounter on the very threshold of your existence as a party, if you introduce a religious test into the composition of your national platform. But be it granted that you overcome them—be it granted that you possess yourselves of the government for twenty years. Think you that you would succeed in destroying among you, what I am willing to admit that you conscientiously believe to be an enormous evil—the existence of Catholicism? Not in the least. On the contrary, you would have increased its vitality. There is not a religious faith, even the most erroneous, which has not thriven under persecution. It seems to have been so ordained by heaven, to teach man not to meddle with the conscience of his fellow beings. See the effect of persecution on the Jews. What wild beasts have ever been hunted down with more ferocious perseverance? Have they been converted? No. Have they been destroyed, or have they been diminished in numbers? No. That extraordinary race seems to have been vivified by the axe and the rack of the execu-

* The Church in its Relations with the State. By W. E. Gladstone, M. P. for Newark.

tioner; the elixir of life was at the bottom of the overflowing cup of bitterness presented to their lips; they have known how to fatten upon exile and famine; they have expanded and grown in the blighting atmosphere of dungeons, and propagated in the lap of torture; they have survived the contempt, and conquered the universal hatred of the world. Still dispersed over the face of the earth, Solomon's wealth is theirs still. Nay—they have risen to political power among their former masters; ages of oppression seem to have had no other effect than to sharpen their intellect, and everywhere their ascendency is now felt, even in all the arts and sciences. It looks as if the malediction of God has been softened at sight of their sufferings, and as if the persecution of man has extorted the forgiveness of the Lord, for those whom he had doomed to be the eternal vagrants of the earth.

Will it not be a lesson to you? Persecute the Catholics, and in twenty years they will be ten times more numerous and powerful than they are now. Look into futurity, and you may discover in it things which may cool into sobriety the passions of the day. Men of the North! you frequently say to the South:—What will you do in twenty years with your six millions of black slaves? Allow me to ask you:—What you will do in twenty years with six millions of Catholics—of bad citizens—of disfranchised Americans—of white slaves? Your position, I think, will be more embarrassing than ours, and we have one advantage over you, which we can lay as a flattering unction to our souls—we did not make them slaves. If it be an evil, it is no evil of our own creation. We found the slaves as they are, and we have even bettered their condition. Had we found the blacks free, enjoying all our immunities and rights, and on that same footing of equality with us which has always existed between Protestants and Catholics, and had the question been put to us—Shall they be made slaves? I believe that I speak the sentiment of the South, when I affirm that the answer would have been, No. Will the North show less liberality towards

Catholics than the South would show towards the African blacks? Men of the North, you found the Catholics your equals in everything—will you disfranchise them? Do you not fear that a voice may be heard saying to you, "Cain, what hast thou done with thy brother?" What will you do, Protestants, with the twenty millions of Pariahs you will have among you in fifty years? In that distant wilderness through which the Amazon flows, amidst pestilential vapors fatal to human life, and in impervious jungles destined only to creeping reptiles, will you at least be merciful enough to provide them with a new Liberia?

Take my advice, if you wish to eradicate Catholicism,—go to work like practical men, and not like fools and dreaming visionaries. Do not inflict political disabilities. Do you think it would answer your purpose? You might as well attempt to throw down one of the pyramids of Egypt with a toothpick. Adopt some effectual measures. Let there be a St. Bartholomew night for all the Catholics. Give them all to the dagger of the assassin, or drive them from the country—all of them, men, women, and children. The next step will be to establish a quarantine, not of forty days but of forty centuries, against Catholicism. You will have to go further. You will have to prohibit all the Protestant inhabitants of the United States from holding any intercourse with Catholic countries, because one of them, in the course of his travels, might catch the contagion of Catholicism, and introduce it again here on his return. If you cannot do that, let Catholicism alone. You cannot check or retard its course by political disabilities. Were you to persevere in the attempt, you would, as a party, commit suicide, and to no purpose. You had better bear in mind that it is the interest of Protestantism that Catholicism be powerful in the midst of the innumerable host of sects which have sprung up on the prolific soil of freedom. It is the fear of Catholicism which keeps them united, and that union is favorable to Protestantism. Destroy Catholicism, and every other Church, now

living in comparative peace, would be at war with each other. Protestantism is to Catholicism what Carthage was to Rome. It is, perhaps, the interest of both, and the interest of the world, that they should confront each other as long as possible. No, no; let religion alone. The idea of making Americans do anything by compulsion is preposterous. No American will submit to direct or indirect dictation; he must remain free in the choice of his religion as in everything else. I can conceive of but one religious establishment whose members should be declared incapable of enjoying political rights in this country. It is that religious establishment, if it exists, whose members acknowledge temporal allegiance to any other power than the Government of the United States. I am willing to guard against that, not because I think there is any cause for it, but because I am willing to give ample satisfaction to such of our fellow-citizens whose brains may be haunted by imaginary apprehensions.

I would, therefore, propose this amendment to the constitution of this order. Erase the words: Roman Catholic, wherever they are found, and substitute in their place these words: "And all those who, whatever be their religious creed, cannot declare under oath that they acknowledge in these United States of America no other political and civil supremacy or temporal power, than that which is derived from the Federal Constitution and the respective sovereignty of the states composing this confederacy." These words, I believe, cover the whole ground, and ought, in my opinion, to give full guaranty to those who pretend to be, or are really, afraid, that the Pope may exercise temporal power in these United States. If not, I am willing to modify the language of the amendment so as to answer their object.

Should you decree that the constitution of the order must remain as it is, then we are instructed by the unanimous vote of the state council of Louisiana, composed of Protestants and Catholics, to declare that they will secede in a body—absolutely

secede, and hold no communion with you. Louisiana will take such a course with infinite regret, but she cannot compromise away the Constitution of the United States. She will not yield the breadth of a hair in relation to the establishment of a religious test. What will be the consequence of her secession? It is my individual opinion that, in the coming presidential election, she will have to define her position. She will not vote for a man who will have pledged himself to all your doctrines. She will either support the Democratic candidate, if he is sound as to the naturalization laws, or she will vote for a candidate of her own. She will publish her platform, and she will firmly abide by it with self-approbation, and, she hopes, with the approbation of the world. It will be emphatically an American platform—true both to the spirit and the letter of the Constitution of the United States—a platform to which no fanaticism of any sort will be permitted to nail a single plank—a platform on which Washington himself, were he alive, might stand with honor, and proclaim with pride that our native land is the model land, and that it still continues to be the asylum of all political and religious creeds without exception, without party favoritism, or state preference for any. When Louisiana shall erect on high, in the far south, her beacon of pure light, there will be a vast and rapid gathering round it from the dismayed phalanx of democracy, and from your own ranks. As Louisiana adopts your platform, save one rotten fragment of it, which she rejects, all the malcontents now existing, and who may hereafter exist among you, will eagerly avail themselves of the occasion afforded them to desert your banner. As to the Democrats, who have sense enough to discover that they can no longer rest on the broken reed of foreign influence to retain the power which is ebbing away from them, and whom you can everywhere hear proclaiming that they have no objection to a repeal or modification of the naturalization laws, but that they can never consent to abridging the liberty of conscience in religious matters, you will see them flock round our new standard

with shouts of delight. I have heard it observed, that should Louisiana secede, she would be a lost Pleiad—a lost Pleiad! To separate, to part company, is not to be lost. When her sister Pleiades fail in their mission to be the pilots of safe navigation, it is time for her to separate—it is time for her to rise alone—to culminate alone towards the meridian of truth, honor, and liberty—where she alone will shed those "sweet influences" which the Bible attributes to that celestial heptarchy. She will then shine with increased lustre in the centre of the American firmament, when the rest of the constellation shall be descending the western horizon, to disappear in the ocean of fanaticism, civil strife, confusion, ruin, and desolation.

Brothers, if you compel Louisiana to secede, you will secure for her as glorious a position as I could wish, if I took into consideration her interests only, and not yours in common with hers. If you compel her to secede, you put her at the head of a party which is bound to be triumphant in the end. There will be but one main issue before the people. On our flag will be inscribed these words: "Down with foreign influence; liberty of conscience; no religious test; equality of rights." On yours will be read in letters as awful as those which flamed luridly on the walls of the Babylonian palace: "No liberty of conscience; political disabilities; a religious test; no equality of rights among native born Americans." There needs no prophet fired with divine inspiration, but human wisdom is sufficient, to foretell that, when these two flags meet, the party at whose head you are going to place Louisiana will gain a much more glorious victory than the one which is recorded in history under the name of the "Battle of New Orleans."

Louisiana acknowledges that, at the beginning of the contest, you may have the superiority of numbers on your side, but that is the only superiority she is willing to recognise. She will have enlisted on her side as much talent, patriotism, and energy as you may possess—and she will have more than that, to make your part of the scales kick the beam; she will have

justice, right, Christian toleration, open-hearted magnanimity, and political foresight on her side, and, as a necessary consequence, she will have the honest sympathies of the world in her favor—and what is of infinitely more importance, she will have the approbation and the countenance of Him who is never invoked in vain in the struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor, and whose judgment, although on many occasions slow to manifest itself, is sure to be recorded at last in the annals of the human race for the warning of future generations.

But suppose that you succeed in the next presidential campaign, will your success be of long duration? In what position will your administration be placed? At home, a million or two millions of active Catholic citizens ostracized by its policy, and therefore animated against it by the most deadly hatred. Around that formidable nucleus will gather all that immense portion of the population which may be opposed to you by a difference of opinion in politics, and from numberless other motives. With a host of bitterer enemies than any administration ever had at home, what will be your position abroad? You will have insulted one hundred and fifty millions of human beings who are in the habit of looking up to you for sympathy, and who are every day gravitating more or less towards emancipation from bondage. You encourage enslaved nations to break their chains and to become free; and at the same time you tell them that, being Catholics, they are incapable of appreciating the blessings of self-government and of freedom! You tell England that she is a fool to trust Catholics, and that she is jeoparding her free institutions by having raised such wretches from the slough of humiliation in which she had kept them so long! You blame her for having halted in the chase of persecution; and yet when she was hallooing her hounds in full pursuit of the game which you wish to start in your turn, you execrated her! Before the great French Revolution, which began in 1789, Protestantism in France stood on a precarious footing. Suppose that the French government should return to its old line of policy—that of dragooning Protestants into Catholi-

cism—could your administration venture on any friendly admonition or remonstrance? What right, for instance, would you have to advise the Turkish Sultan to treat his Moslem and Christian subjects with the same favor? What right would you have, at the head of the government, to do what it has always done, and to mediate in behalf of the oppressed? How could you exert a salutary influence with certain other nations, in trying to prevail upon them to put Protestants on a footing of equality with Catholics? Are we not daily interfering at Rome itself in favor of our Protestant citizens? With what good grace could you insist on the Pope granting to Americans the privilege of having a temple in the Eternal City, and to worship God as they please? Is it not worse for you to say to an American—You shall never fill any office of trust or profit in your own country because you are a Catholic—than for the Pope to say to a foreigner: You shall not build a Protestant temple in my dominions? If your administration should proclaim that all the American Catholics, citizens by birth, are to be excluded from office as *dangerous*, has not every other government on the face of the earth as strong a right to exclude foreign Protestants from its territory? What would you say if Austria was to declare to-morrow that none but Americans who are Catholics are permitted to travel through her territories? How could you remonstrate? If you have the right to ostracize the very natives of your soil, on the ground that being Catholics they are dangerous to your institutions, Austria would have a much stronger right to ostracize American Protestants on the same plea—that they are *dangerous* to her peculiar form of government. You judge for yourselves. She also would judge for herself, just as unmindful as you are of any other consideration than that of her fancied security or danger.

It is our national policy to claim a sort of protectorate over Mexico, and over all those Republics which have sprung up in South America; this we claim as being their elder sister. You wish your influence to predominate in this Continent over

that of any European power. Do you think that it will further your views, to proclaim fro.. the White House and from the Capitol, that all those nations are composed of imbecile wretches, unworthy of any office of trust or profit? Do you not think that you would put, by so doing, a double-edged weapon in the hands of your powerful and sleepless adversaries, England and France? A very wise and a fine thing it is indeed, for those who desire to annex Cuba, to declare to those very beings whom they are goading into rebellion against the Government of Spain, that when they become Americans, they shall be held unworthy of any office of trust or profit! But it is needless to give further illustrations. It is self-evident that our government would become powerless at home and abroad, if any Administration got into power on the platform which is sought to be established. Say what you please—disguise it as you like—if you retain in the Constitution of the Order, the obnoxious clauses which I denounce to you as pregnant with so much mischief—and if you become the Government—the cry will be that the Government interferes with the right of conscience; it will be the truth—and the prestige of our Republic will be lost throughout the world. On the day when the wing of every wind shall carry to the most distant regions of the earth, the news that one of the principles of this Government is the proscription of Catholics, a howl of despair will be heard from the oppressed in every country. They will abandon for ever the hope of our interfering in their favor, even through the exertion of moral influence, because they will feel that if we have the right to oppress our Catholic brethren on the ground that they are dangerous, all other governments may use the same arguments to justify their tyrannical acts.

The reasons which you give in support of your hostile position against Catholicism, are the very same which, centuries ago, were used to justify the persecution of Christianity itself, so that you cannot even claim the merit of invention. You are plagiarists. If the Emperor Julian, if Theodoric the Goth,

could rise from the tomb, they would complain of your stealing their thunder. But if you are disposed to borrow the logic of that long train of Cæsars who have had to answer for the blood of so many martyrs, why do you not imitate its application? Amphitheatres and arenas may still be constructed; lions and tigers may still be found to tear human limbs; men and women, the aged and the young, are still ready to die rather than abjure their God; and if the old Roman populace may be wanted in vain to shout with joy at the exhilarating scene of torture, methinks that another race of beings might be seen rising from the bowels of the earth to witness an exhibition so gratifying to their nature, and so worthy of their character.

Brothers, the constitution of the "Order," which proscribes not only Catholics, but also the Protestants who have married Catholic wives, and which goes even so far as to strike at the Protestant children of Catholic parents, is already known under the name of the "Blue Book." A suitable appellation indeed! Beware, brothers, beware! No political secret can long be observed in these United States. Your Blue Book recalls to mind the Blue Laws of Connecticut, and brings back the recollection of those dismal times when crazy old women were tried as witches and sent to the stake. You will be called the "Blue Book party," and that alone will damn you. There is something in a name, as you well know. Believe me, brothers, do not run after defeat—a shameful defeat—when triumph knocks for admittance at your door. Do not rush from the Capitol to the Tarpeian Rock.

Brothers, I have spoken from the fulness of my heart, and if, in its outpourings, I have said anything which has grated harshly on your ears, I beg you to forgive me; it was unintentional. I have spoken too long, but the trespass on your patience is due to the anxiety which I feel when I see you taking a fatal step which will crush in the bud our party, a party which might be a glorious one, a party of which we might be for ever proud. I supplicate you to expunge from your constitution,

and consequently from your platform, that part of it which imposes religious disabilities. Can any one of you, putting one hand on his breast, and extending the other towards the flag of his country, swear that Webster, Clay, Calhoun—that those great men who so lately were our venerated leaders, would be, if alive, in favor of the course of policy which we intend to pursue. Those glorious luminaries have for ever departed from the exalted seats which they occupied among us; but they have left still afloat in our atmosphere a body of light sufficient to guide our steps in the path which they trod and pointed out to their followers. I supplicate you not to do what they would oppose if they could. Those big hearts and magnificent intellects would never have assented to the establishment of any *religious test whatever*. We draw this assurance from the whole tenor of their lives.

If you do not expunge the religious clause which is in your constitution, if you retain it and thereby establish religious exclusion in this country, remember that the word in the opposite camp will be agitation! agitation! eternal agitation!—the word of O'Connell to his followers on the other side of the Atlantic. It proved successful against the whole power of Great Britain, and in America it is sure to overwhelm our new party with ruin, confusion, and permanent defeat. Why should it not be in the rest of the United States as it is in Louisiana? There Protestants and Catholics daily intermarry, and live in brotherly amity, in mutual trust, and form but one family.

Brothers, I have done. I conclude with one remark which, if it strikes your minds and hearts as vividly as it does mine, will make you, by an unanimous and spontaneous vote, expunge from your constitution the obnoxious clause to which I have called your attention. William Chambers, in one of the late numbers of his estimable journal, says, "There is among the Americans a singular social phenomenon. We see, in effect, two nations, one white and another black, growing up together within the same political circle, but never mingling on a

footing of equality." I say to you in my turn, do not add to that phenomenon another still more portentous, which would be, the fact of the existence of two white nations, the one Catholic and the other Protestant, growing up together by the decree of God, within the same political circle, but, by the decree of man, never mingling on a footing of equality. This would be the most fearful of all evils—an evil of your own creating. It is to avert it, as much as may be in my power, that I have ventured to address you at this length. If I had trusted to my own natural, or acquired faculties, I would not have attempted to bring conviction home to your minds. I have trusted in Him who can fashion the will of man as He pleases. I have no powers of persuasion. But He may have given some to my lips, or rather He may Himself speak within you. Then, O God, I lift up my hands to Thee. Touch the hearts of those patriotic but self-deluded men. Let there not be such a thing as an inferior race of Americans in these United States. Let my brothers in the flesh be my brothers in the spirit. Let true fraternal love unite all thy children, whatever be their mode of worship; and if I should be the humble instrument chosen by Thee to attain such a result, then, every morning and evening, when the hour for prayer strikes, shall I, on bended knees, ever thank Thee for this manifestation of Thy mercy and goodness.

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